LOK SABHA

Friday, February 28, 1997/Phalguna 9, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at One Minute Past Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum) : Sir, yesterday also, we had raised this issue ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I think, Shri Chatterjee, we can take it up after the Question Hour.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Since it concerns the List of Business, it comes even before the Question Hour. So, it comes first. Therefore, I request you...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : Sir, these Items No. 11 and 12 be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : It is mentioned in the List of Business and, therefore, should come before the Question Hour. What I am requesting you is, when we raise the issue, kindly refer it to the Standing Committee on Finance. We know that there are difficulties because it is issued as an Ordinance. Therefore, there may be a time limit. But then my appeal to you is that this Reconstruction Bank of India is being transformed into an investment company...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : 'Reconstruction' is being replaced by 'investment'. It is a dangerous thing. It is a dangerous game.

[Translation]

Please stop it.

[English]

It was your bank.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : This objection can come only when that item on the List of Business comes up.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : That means, there will be no time left for reference.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai-North East) : I will have any objection with an item mentioned in the List of Business only when that item comes up.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Sir, Shri Pramod Mahajan should try to understand it because there is a limitation on it...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Not only am I trying to understand it but I am also supporting his contention of withdrawing it.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : It may not come even today. It may come on Monday or Tuesday. But when it comes, there may not be time even for consideration by the Standing Committee.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, Shri Jaswant Singh and Shri Pramod Mahajan are very right. You can raise the issue only when we take up this particular agenda item.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : They should ask the Government to withdraw it from the List of Business.

MR. SPEAKER : You have a point in the sense that if you raise it at that time when it comes up, then there may be a time constraint for whatever you are asking for. What I will do is, I will discuss with the Finance Minister, the author of the Bill, and the Parliamentary Affairs Minister and take an appropriate decision.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Without disturbing the Question Hour, I would like to ask you a question.

MR. SPEAKER : You have already disturbed.

11.05 hrs.

RE: EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO COVER LOK SABHA PROCEEDINGS

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : I would like to know if you have permitted any authority other than the Doordarshan to cover this Parliament because I find that throughout the country, there is an advertisement that the Star TV has the exclusive right to cover Parliament proceedings on Budget. They have been collecting money since the 12th of February. Even in the midst of the Budget speech or any other speech made on the floor of the House, they are proposing to insert an advertisement including the advertisements of liquor and cigarette.

Have they taken your permission, Sir?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : Sir, I think, though there might be differences as to when this issue shuld be raised, the issue itself is substantial and the aspects of it are previlege of the House — disclosure of budgetary proposals ahead of time to television companies and or other people; and the television companies or whoever going with full page advertisement. Does it suggest that they have exclusive right of coverage than what is not even our exclusive right?

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : We are not a commodity to be sold.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh) : It is the exclusive right till four o'clock this afternoon only of the

Finance Minister and the Prime Minister. Even the Cabinet is not privy to it. We are, of course, not privy to it. And, if we are denied this information, the Parliament is denied this information and the other House does not have access to it until the full Budget presentation is made, then I think this Government owes an explanation as to how it is possible that budgetary proposals were shared, not just today, even in past years, reportedly, with some private television companies and individuals. It suggests that they were shared even with industrialists. So, we want a clarification today...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have every time defended the honour of this House and the nation is grateful to you. You have defended this institution every time.

This news has created such a bad situation that the authority of the Star TV *vis-a-vis* the Finance Ministry has been exposed in such a manner that it is derogatory to the honour of the Parliament. Therefore, it is time that before the placement of the Budget, you should dispose it of finally and once for all as to what is the message of yours and the House. We cannot tolerate it.

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH (Balia) (Bihar) : This is an insult of the House...*(Interruptions)* It would set a wrong precedent to show advertisements during budget...*(Interruptions)* It would tentamount to violation of the conventions. Please give your ruling on it.

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum) : Sir, the Budget matters should not be made public before its presentation, through a private TV channel. That is our view...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai - North East) : Sir, you have got the exclusive right of telecasting of the parliamentary proceedings.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : What right they have got to say that they want the Budget papers two hours before the placement of the Budget? Two hours before, they want the Budget Papers, when even the Parliament has no access to them before the placement of the Budget.

You should not tolerate it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I think, you have made your point. Let me hear the former Minister of Information and Broadcasting who wants to say something.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi) : The secrecy of budget caried so much importance that even a slight hint or indication was viewed as violation of the secrecy of budget. You might remember that once a Finance Minister before the presentation of the budget, had told his friend to enjoy his cigarette on that day as it was going to cost more thenceforth. This statement was considered as an indication of imposition of tax on cigarettes but in this case, the entire budget is being shared and telecast rights are being given ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : This is not the point. The point being raised is about the right to telecast and not the contents of the Budget.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The procedures regarding presentation of budget have been violated. As Shri Jaswant Singh has stated that the budget proposals have been shared and that too with a private channel. It is a very serious matter ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Okay, let me say now. First of all, I should say that I never knew that during the Question Hour the Speaker will be put the first question.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I think, you have raised a very important point.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, please. Hon. Members, you cannot be speaking like that. Take your seats.

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North) : Sir, I have already given a notice for that, which I thought should be taken up when the Budget is being presented. When I have given a notice, I am being deprived...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : No. That may be a little late.

SHRI RAM NAIK : No, Sir, I do not know.

MR. SPEAKER : It is okay. Now, the matter has come up. Will take cognizance of your notice. That is all right.

I can only say that the exclusive right to telecast the proceedings of the Parliament has been given to the Doordarshan and the Doordarshan only. If some other agencies want to have a footage for telecasting the Lok Sabha proceedings, they have to take it from Doordarshan. That also - a condition has been laid by the Parliament - will be subject to the Parliamentary privileges. That is the condition imposed. So, the exclusive right of telecasting the Parliamentary proceedings lies only with Doordarshan and not with anybody else.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : But the Information and Broadcasting Minister has violated these guidelines.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has already violated these guidelines.

MR. SPEAKER : No. I do not think so. I do not think like that. As far as we are concerned, we have given the exclusive right to Doordarshan. I have said that if Doordarshan wants to give a footage to any other agency, they can give it subject to Parliamentary privileges. So, it is for them to take care of it.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : But the Budget papers are given to them after it is presented ...*(Interruptions)* But the word being spread is that it is a pre-recorded thing.

MR. SPEAKER : But the way they are advertising it, it seems that it is misleading. I think the Information and Broadcasting Ministry should take appropriate action on that. I will find out how it happened like that.

Now, Question No. 101, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

11.12 hrs.

[Translation]

Persons Detained under FERA

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*101. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV :
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether many persons detained under FERA have been released;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether the action being taken in matters of FERA has been reviewed by the Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Persons arrested under section 35 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) are produced before the Magistrates who eighter remand them to judicial custody for specific periods or release them on bail.

Zone-wise figures of persons arrested under FERA and released subsequently during the last three years are as under :

Year Zone	1994	1995	1996
Mumbai	151	116	90
Calcutta	103	13	29
Delhi	40	32	19
Jalandhar	13	13	28
Chennai	58	54	47
	365	228	213

The data regarding persons arrested under FERA are not maintained State-wise.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, the Government regularly monitors the action taken by the Enforcement Directorate to prevent harassment.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Maiden reply by the new Minister!

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to say that in reply to my question the hon. Minister himself has admitted that inspite of strict enforcement of Act like FERA, since long FERA is being violated on large scale. I feel that economic position of our country will shatter if stringent action is not taken to check this trend. In the reply he himself has admitted that number of cases of FERA violation has declined marginally during 1994-96 but these cannot be contained or curtailed to the expected level. As per the figures given by hon. Minister in 1994 in Mumbai area 151 cases of FERA violation were registered which declined to 116 in 1995; and upto 90 in the year 1996. In Calcutta 103 cases of FERA violation were registered in 1994, 13 cases were registered in 1995 and 29 in 1996. In Delhi 40 such cases were registered in 1994, 32 in 1995 and 19 in 1996. In Jalandhar, during 1994 and 1995, 13 such cases were registered and in 1996 this number was 28. The number of such cases have increased. In Chennai 58 cases were registered during 1994, which declined to 54 in 1995 and 47 in 1996.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Ask the question now, please.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : So far 213 cases of FERA violation have been registered and I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how much money is involved in these cases. You have told about the number of cases but my question is about the amount of money embezzled in these cases.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a very good question.